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COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1991

Addendum

Foreword of the Secretary-General

This report provides information on activities carried out by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in 1991, before the beginning of my tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Nevertheless, having now chaired the first regular session of ACC of 1992, held at the headquarters of the World Health Organization at Geneva on 8 and 9 April, I should like to utilize this foreword to offer a few preliminary observations on some of the challenges before ACC, to which I will return in next year's report in the light of the Committee's work and deliberations during 1992.

Profound changes are taking place in international relations which open up important new prospects for international cooperation and have far-reaching implications for the United Nations, as well as for the system as a whole. It is significant that the first Summit Meeting of the Security Council, held on 31 January 1992, called for both a strengthening of the United Nations and a more efficient and effective United Nations system. In so doing, the Council underlined the close relationships which exist between peace and development and emphasized that "lasting peace and stability require effective international cooperation for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of a better life for all in larger freedom". It is indeed in relation to

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preventive diplomacy and peace-building - in establishing the institutions of peace and the conditions in which peace can endure - that, I believe, all members of ACC have a major and shared responsibility.

The greater willingness of the international community to act through the United Nations offers unprecedented opportunities for all the organizations of the system. It also creates greater expectations and new challenges which require a collective, concerted response on the part of the system as a whole.

In working for economic and social development, the system responds to the needs and aspirations of the majority of mankind. Development must continue to be its main common objective; the sum of its actions must enable the peoples of developing countries to improve their well-being, thereby contributing to the global security which all States seek. At the same time, the system's priorities for action in that sphere must reflect our evolving understanding of the nature of the development process and of its relationship to the global interest.

These considerations have important implications for the work of ACC itself, of which its members are keenly aware. ACC must be the guiding force in introducing greater coherence in the work of the system and ensuring that the initiatives launched by the various organizations, in response to the policies and priorities set by member States, are complementary and mutually supporting.

The basic challenge before ACC is to exploit fully, and in a concerted manner, the diversity of expertise and breadth of mandates available to the ensemble of the system. This means not only promoting improved coordination of agencies' actions in different sectors but also ensuring that the system's capacities for research and policy analysis, finance for development and technical assistance are mobilized in a mutually reinforcing way in pursuance of concerted strategies for action. The Committee's contribution to greater coherence within the United Nations system should also include the promotion of more flexible methods of work, which would enable the system to respond rapidly and effectively to new tasks and challenges as they occur, as well as concerted efforts for the effective management of the human and financial resources at its disposal.

Many of the issues I have outlined were the subject of an extensive exchange of views at the April session of ACC, under a broad agenda item aimed at initiating a dialogue on the role which the United Nations system will be called upon to play in the 1990s and the contribution to be made by organizations, both individually and collectively. The dialogue will be pursued with the Economic and Social Council. In the context of the same item, ACC agreed to undertake a review of its own role and functioning, which will be developed in the course of the year. The approaches to the role of ACC embodied in General Assembly resolution 46/189, as well as relevant recommendations of the Economic and Social Council and the Committee on Programme and Coordination, will be fully taken into account in this process.

Another focus of the April session of ACC was the implications for the United Nations system of the transition process in Eastern and Central Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Issues of system-wide concern relating to the follow-up of UNCTAD VIII were also reviewed, alongside final preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The major responsibilities devolving on ACC in effectively pursuing the outcome of that important Conference were generally recognized. Arrangements made at the inter-agency level as a follow-up to the Conference will be fully covered in next year's report.

In summary, I wish to underline the importance that I attach, in my capacity as Chairman of ACC, to promoting collective action throughout the United Nations system. At the session of ACC in April 1992, I was greatly encouraged by the commitment of all members to this goal and by their readiness to develop new approaches for collaboration. I am confident that I can count on the contribution and full cooperation of all executive heads in ensuring that coordination receives high priority and that the full potential of the United Nations system is harnessed to meet the critical challenges of the future.